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ABSTRACT

The Preservice Reading Education Program (PREP) is a competency-based teacher education program for elementary and early childhood education students. It focuses on the following five major activities: (1) the coordination of an organized program in reading education around identified teacher competencies; (2) the individualization of instruction for preservice teachers through a system of modular instruction; (3) the provision of supervised field activities for students which have direct relationships to college classroom activities; (4) the creation of a systematic means for relating college resources to a large number of identified pupil instructional needs in surrounding public schools; and (5) the establishment of a continuous program of inservice education and consultation among both college and public school personnel. Instructional models have been developed for PREP to train students in teaching developmental reading, and diagnostic teaching approaches are included in another series of modules used in the program. Modules include knowledge and performance competency objectives and opportunities for student evaluations of the system. Audiovisual and print materials are used for teaching and diagnostic techniques and procedures. (Author/LBH)

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MADISON COLLEGE

PREP

PRESERVICE READING EDUCATION PROGRAM

1974 - 1976

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SP009 778

PRESERVICE READING EDUCATION PROGRAM

(PREP)

I. Summary

The Preservice Reading Education Program (PREP) at Madison College is a competency-based teacher education program for elementary and early childhood education students. The project focuses on five major activities: (1) the coordination of an organized program in reading education around identified teacher competencies, (2) the individualization of instruction for preservice teachers through a system of modular instruction, (3) the provision of supervised field activities for students which have direct relationships to college classroom activities, (4) the creation of a systematic means for relating college resources to a large number of identified pupil instructional needs in surrounding public schools, and (5) the establishment of a continuous program of inservice education and consultation among both college and public school personnel involved in the program.

Through the research, development and implementation phases of the program, an individualized/personalized competency-based training program in reading has been developed for prospective classroom teachers. Organized through program competency objectives, the project includes both modular and nonmodular course work. Instructional modules have been developed for the PREP project to train students in teaching developmental reading. Diagnostic teaching approaches are included in another series of modules used in the program. Modules include knowledge and performance competency objectives and opportunities for student evaluations of the system.

Teacher training audio-visual and print materials have been coordinated and developed for use as demonstration and independent student learning activities. Students view and listen to audio-visual materials which demonstrate teaching techniques and approaches and provide practice in diagnostic procedures.

Through the field-based services, PREP students teach reading skills and tutor children in the public schools. Inservice workshops are provided for the schools' staff to familiarize them with the program and the latest methods and materials in reading.

Funding for the PREP project comes from U. S. Office of Education with additional support from Madison College and the Rockingham County School System. Various aspects of the program have been presented at local, state, and national meetings by project staff. Descriptions of the program are being sent to schools throughout the nation. It is expected that modules will be available through commercial publishers.

II. Explanation and Analysis of the Program

A. Description and development of the program and its objectives

The PREP project was developed within the Elementary and Early Childhood Education Department at Madison College. The project was funded in 1974 and 1975 as a research and development program of the U. S. Office of Education, Right-to-Read Program, with additional support from Madison College and Rockingham County Public Schools. The purpose of the program is to develop and implement a comprehensive-coordinated training program in reading and related areas for prospective teachers.

The PREP instructional program is a competency-based approach which combines on-campus instruction and field experiences in modular and nonmodular courses. Through the organization of general and specific competency objectives in developmental and diagnostic reading, and children's literature and language arts courses, provision is made for the sequential development of knowledge through a continuum of experiences needed to teach basic reading skills and the application of skills in the subject areas. Reading courses are designed to demonstrate the essential features of the individualized/personalized model of teaching which classroom teachers are expected to utilize in the elementary school. Modular and nonmodular courses are available to students in different segments of the program.

Through stress on innovative/flexible methods and the provision of a variety of learning and mastery alternatives, the program aims to meet the different needs and backgrounds of the PREP students. Opportunities to try out stimulating reading methods and work directly with children are arranged through the monitored field-teaching experiences.

The instructional delivery system adopted for the project is the modular approach. PREP modules include five basic components: (1) competency objectives in knowledge and performance skills, (2) formative tests, (3) learning activities and resources, (4) alternative mastery activities, and (5) student evaluation forms. A series of developmental reading modules develop competencies in the areas of readiness, basic reading skills, approaches, and classroom organization. In the second series of modules, students develop competencies in diagnosing reading problems, diagnostic planning and teaching approaches, and managing the classroom. Students observe testing at the Madison Reading Center Clinic and gain insight into the diagnostic process and understanding children with reading problems.

A variety of audio-visual and printed materials have been developed and coordinated with the competency objectives in order to demonstrate innovative and individualized teaching techniques. Model teaching lessons, approaches, and simulated experiences are available for students through filmstrips, films, slides, cassettes and video tapes. The training resources are utilized for class demonstrations and for individual study by PREP students.

The PREP project provides services to the cooperating schools through the field-based program. In the first year of the program, four elementary Rockingham County schools were designated field sites. Three additional elementary schools in the city of Harrisonburg were added to the program in the second year. The reading skills and tutoring program offers greater assistance in supplemental and corrective reading beyond what is available to children in the schools.

Inservice workshops are provided for the cooperating schools' staff. In the first year of the PREP project, four inservice meetings were scheduled for each

school and for the district's administrators. This year the inservice workshops will take the form of two large district-wide meetings. After school "get-acquainted" meetings and workshops on specific reading topics are available to each school upon request. The workshops are provided to improve the skills and attitudes of elementary school personnel who are involved with PREP students.

B. Personnel involved. Project staff includes (1) a director, (2) a module writer, and (3) a materials developer and coordinator. In addition to project staff, Madison faculty and off-campus professionals are employed as consultants to perform special tasks. Inservice consultants present the workshops for the cooperating schools. In the second year of the project, research consultants have been added to assist with the evaluation procedures. Three student assistants are also employed to work with professors in scheduling and monitoring PREP students' teaching assignments in the field-based sites.

Two cooperative advisory committees, the Reading Education Advisory Team and the Field-Based Advisory Team, review and recommend revisions for the program development and the field-based activities. The teams include Madison faculty in the field of reading, early childhood education, language arts, library science, and special education, along with Madison graduate and undergraduate students, and public school principals, reading supervisors, reading specialists, and classroom teachers who are involved with the program.

Students in the Elementary and Early Childhood Education program are required to complete six hours of reading courses and three hours of language arts courses taken in the Elementary and Early Childhood Education Department in addition to three hours of children's literature taken through the Library Science Department. The six hours in reading courses (developmental reading and diagnostic reading) are required for state certification. The project staff and four other faculty members are responsible for teaching the two reading courses in the program. The language arts course is taught by

another faculty member in the department. The diagnostic reading course is totally modular in form and the developmental reading course is offered in modular and nonmodular sections. Students in the Special Education and Library Science programs are required to complete the developmental course and often elect to take the diagnostic course.

PREP students enrolled in modular reading courses provide services to the field-based schools through the completion of their module requirements. In the developmental reading course, students develop reading skill games and devices. As part of their mastery activities, they try out the games with small groups of children for three or four lessons.

In the diagnostic reading course, over 100 PREP students tutor children in the field-based schools each semester. Modules require students to informally diagnose a child and develop and teach a corrective program. The children are tutored for a ten-week period in hourly sessions twice a week. Students prepare lesson plans which are reviewed by faculty prior to the teaching sessions. A final report is written by the student and sent to the schools for review by the reading specialists and subsequent tutors. Students are evaluated through individual conferences, mastery tasks and tests, lesson plans and final reports. Staff and graduate students monitor the PREP students through visits to the schools to evaluate their diagnostic and tutoring activities. The public schools indicate that children involved in the program usually have moderate reading problems but do not receive the remedial attention they need.

Madison's reading faculty has presented programs describing the modular approach and various aspects of the PREP project at professional meetings throughout the United States. Descriptions of the project and an overview of the modular materials are being sent to teacher-preparation institutions upon request. The modules produced in the program are expected to be published and should be available through a commercial publisher in the near future.

C. Budget and funding. The PREP project was funded $68,000 by the U. S. Office of Education for a two-year period. Madison College provided additional support to the project. A total of 14 diagnostic modular sections and 12 modular and nonmodular developmental sections were offered through the two semesters of the 1975 - 1976 academic year. Rockingham County Schools provided bus transportation for students traveling to two field-based schools.

D. Contribution to the improvement of teacher education. The PREP project's contribution to teacher education includes: (1) specification of the reading curriculum in terms of program competency objectives, (2) cooperative planning and evaluation with the public schools and the college, (3) articulation of the curriculum in terms of teaching tasks related to public school work, (4) field based diagnostic/prescriptive/individualized teaching experiences, (5) improvement of public school teaching competencies through inservice programs, and (6) preparation of college teachers through the use of modular based materials.

E. Evaluation methods and results. Continuous evaluation of the instructional modules is provided by students in the program. The project will be evaluated through several research programs. A criterion-referenced Reading Competency Test has been developed to evaluate student progress in the developmental reading course. Modular and nonmodular sections will be compared to determine the effectiveness of the modular approach. Following the completion of the total program, PREP students will be evaluated through a survey and other instruments. After graduation, a follow-up program will be instituted to determine the students' competency in various areas of reading and their attitude toward the PREP program.

The inservice programs are being evaluated through both a pre-evaluation form and a post-evaluation form. A total of 14 inservice workshops were held in the first year of the project. The results revealed an overall gain in information and skills despite the fact that these were after-school sessions.